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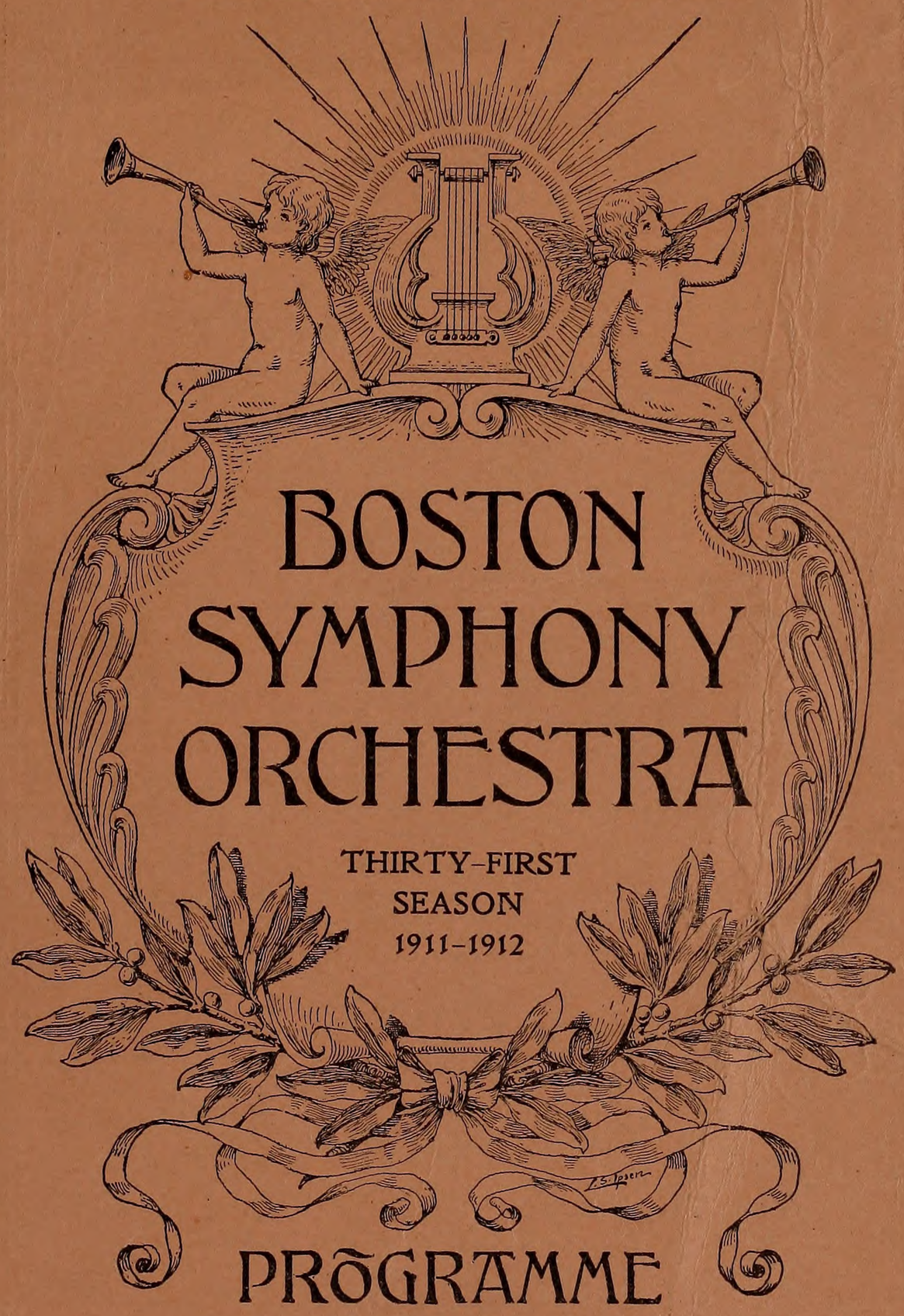

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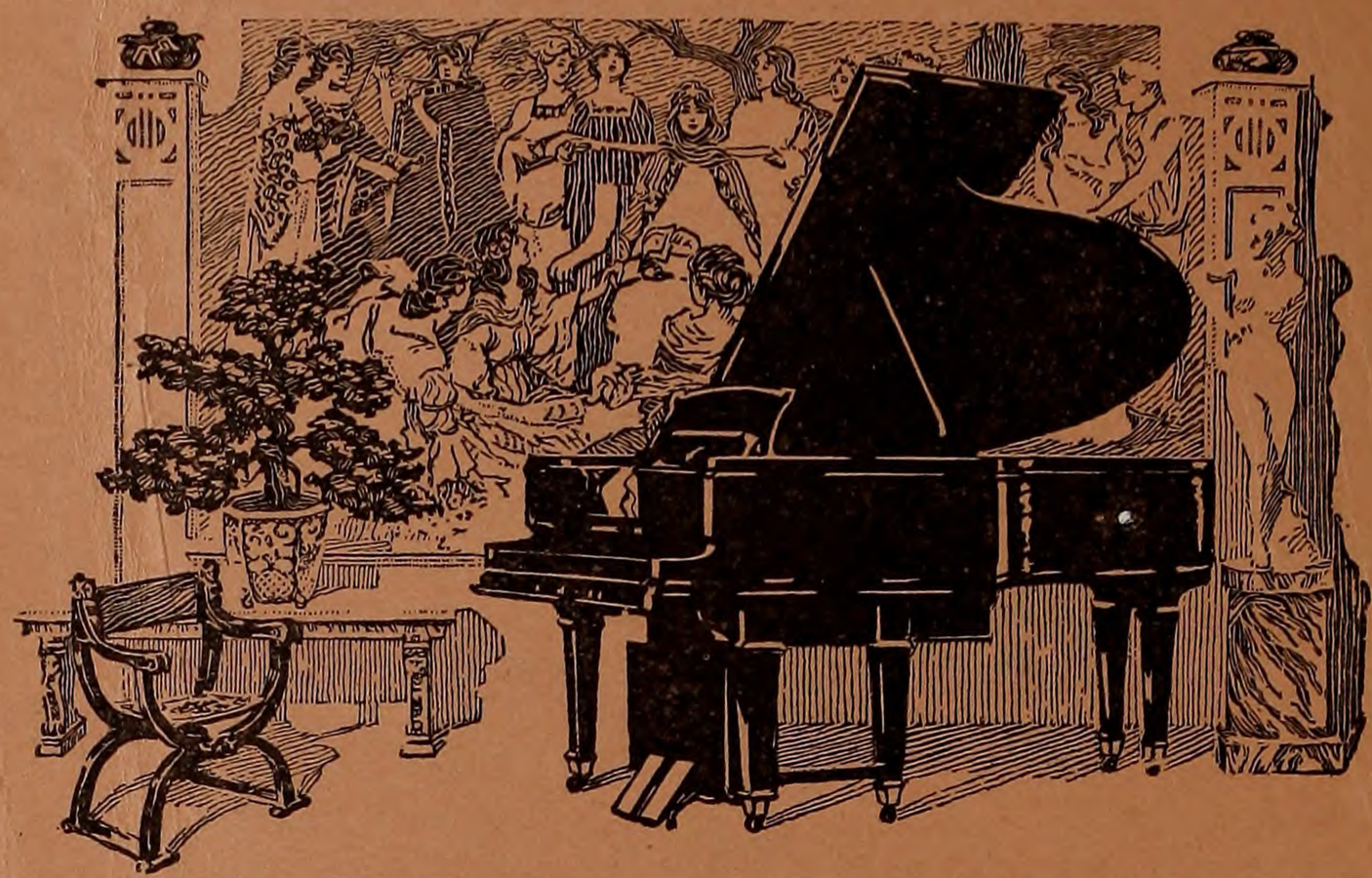

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Boston Symphony Orchestra

MAX FIEDLER, Conductor

Programme of the SECOND CONCERT

WITH HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE NOTES BY PHILIP HALE

WEDNESDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 6

AT 8.15

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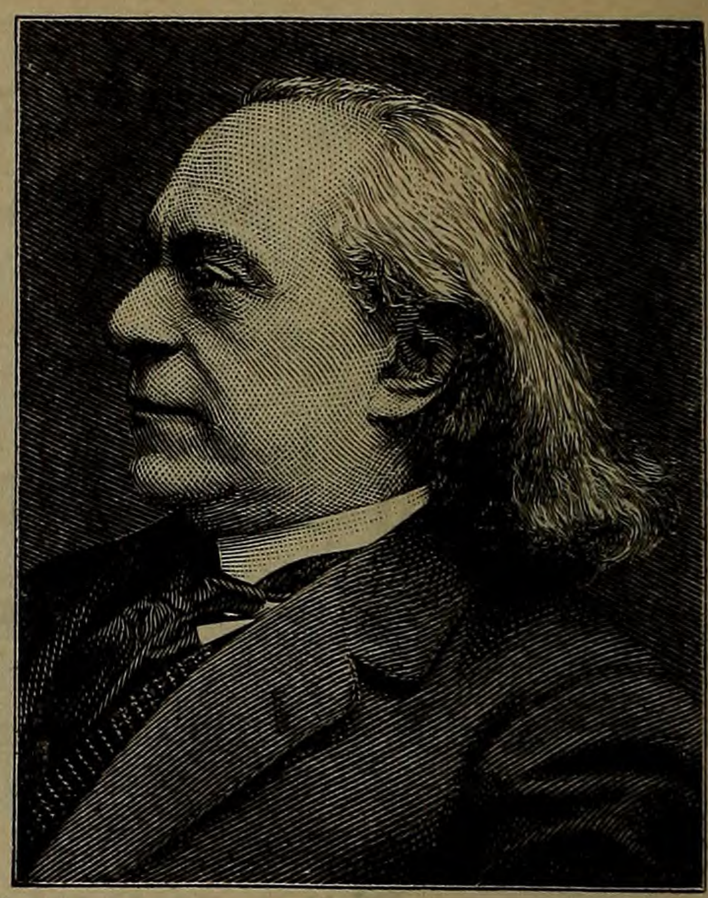

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Twenty-seventh Season in Baltimore

Boston Symphony Orchestra

Thirty-first Season, 1911-1912

MAX FIEDLER, Conductor

SECOND CONCERT

WEDNESDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 6

AT 8.15

PROGRAMME.

Liszt . . . . Symphony after Dante's "Divina Commedia"

I. INFERNO: Lento. Allegro frenetico. Quasi andante. Andante amoroso (Francesca). Tempo primo.

II. *a*. PURGATORIO: Andante con moto. Lamentoso. Poco a poco più di moto.

b. Magnificat.

In commemoration of the Centenary of Liszt's birth.

Saint-Saëns . . . Concerto in B minor for Violin and Orchestra No. 3, Op. 61

I. Allegro non troppo.

II. Andantino quasi allegretto.

III. Molto moderato e maestoso: Allegro non troppo.

Tschaikowsky . . . "Romeo and Juliet," Overture-Fantasia after Shakespeare

---

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---

There will be an intermission of ten minutes after the symphony

SYMPHONY AFTER DANTE'S "DIVINA COMMEDIA" FOR FULL ORCHESTRA AND SOPRANO AND ALTO CHORUS . . . . . FRANZ LISZT

(Born at Raiding, near Oedenburg, Hungary, Oct. 22, 1811; died at Bayreuth, July 31, 1886.)

The first sketches of this symphony were made during Liszt's stay at the country-house of the Princess Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein at Woronince, October, 1847—February, 1848. The first part of the symphony was completed toward the end of April, 1856. The second part was completed July 8, 1856; the score was published in 1858. The first performance was at Dresden at a concert for the Pension Fund of the chorus of the Royal Court Theatre on November 7, 1857, under the direction of the composer. The first part, "Inferno," was produced in Boston at a Philharmonic concert, Mr. Listemann conductor, November 19, 1880. The whole symphony was performed in Boston at a concert of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Mr. Gericke conductor, February 27, 1886; also on May 2, 1903, when the chorus of the Thursday Morning Club, the women's chorus of the Choral Art Society, and others assisted. Mr. Gericke conducted.

The work is scored for three flutes (one interchangeable with piccolo), two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, bass tuba, two sets of kettledrums, cymbals, bass drum, tamtam, two harps, harmonium, strings,

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and chorus of female voices. The score is dedicated to Wagner: "As Virgil led Dante, so hast thou led me through the mysterious regions of tone-worlds drunk with life. From the depths of my heart I cry to thee: 'Tu se' lo mio maestro, e il mio autore!' and dedicate in unalterable love this work. Weimar, Easter, '59."

I. Inferno: Lento, 4-4.

Per me si va nella città dolente:
Per me si va nell' eterno dolore:
Per me si va tra la perduta gente.

Through me the way is to the city dolent;
Through me the way is to eternal dole;
Through me the way among the people lost.
Longfellow.

These words, read by Dante as he looked at the gate of hell, are thundered out by trombones, tuba, double-basses, etc.; and immediately after trumpets and horn make the dreadful proclamation (C-sharp minor): "Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch' entrate" ("All hope abandon, ye who enter in"). Liszt has written the Italian lines under the theme in the score. The two "Inferno motives" follow, the first a descending chromatic passage in the lower strings against roll of drums, the second given to bassoons and violas. There is illustration of Dante's lines that describe the "sighs, complaints, and ululations loud":—

Languages diverse, horrible dialects,
Accents of anger, words of agony,
And voices high and hoarse, with sound of hands,
Made up a tumult that goes whirling on
Forever in that air forever black,
Even as the sand doth, when the whirlwind breathes.
Longfellow.

The Allegro frenetico, 2-2, in the development paints the madness of despair, the rage of the damned. Again there is the cry, "All hope abandon" (trumpets, horns, trombones, tuba). There is a lull in the orchestral storm. Quasi Andante, 5-4. Harps, flutes, violins, a recitative of bass clarinet and two clarinets, lead to the episode of Francesca da Rimini and Paolo. The English horn sings the lamentation:—

There is no greater sorrow
Than to be mindful of the happy time
In misery.

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Before the 'cello takes up the melody sung by the clarinet, the "Lasciate" theme is heard (muted horn, solo), and then in free tempo, Andante amoroso, 7-4, comes the love duet, which ends with the "Lasciate" motive. A harp cadenza brings the return to the first allegro tempo, in which the "Lasciate" theme in combination with the two "Hell motives" is developed with grotesque and infernal orchestration. There is this remark in the score: "This whole passage should be understood as sardonic blasphemous laughter and most sharply defined as such." After the repetition of nearly the whole of the opening section of the allegro the "Lasciate" theme is heard *fff*.

II. Purgatorio and Magnificat. The section movement begins Andante con moto, D major, 4-4. According to the composer there is the suggestion of a vessel that sails slowly over an unruffled sea. The stars begin to glitter, there is a cloudless sky, there is a mystic stillness. Over a rolling figuration is a melody first for horn, then oboe, the "Meditation" motive. This period is repeated a half-tone higher. The "Prayer" theme is sung by 'cello, then by first violin. There is illustration of Dante's tenth canto, and especially of the passage where the sinners call to remembrance the good that they did not accomplish. This remorseful and penitent looking-back and the hope in the future inspired Liszt, according to his commentator, Richard Pohl, to a fugue based on a most complicated theme. After this fugue the gentle "Prayer" and "Repentance" melodies are heard. Harp chords establish the rhythm of the Magnificat * (three flutes ascending in chords of E-flat). This motive goes through sundry modulations. And now an unseen chorus of women, accompanied by harmonium, sings, "Magnificat anima mea Dominum et exultavit spiritus meus, in Deo salutari meo" ("My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour"). A solo voice, that of the Mater gloriosa, repeats the song. A short choral passage leads to "Hosanna, Halleluja." The final harmonies are supposed to illustrate the passage in the twenty-first canto of the "Paradiso":—

* The theme of the Magnificat is derived from the intonation of the Gregorian choral in the form of the second church tone, and was employed by Liszt in his "Hunnenschlacht," "Graner" Mass, "Legende von der heiligen Elisabeth."

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I saw rear'd up,
In color like to sun-illumined gold,
A ladder, which my ken pursued in vain,
So lofty was the summit; down whose steps
I saw the splendors in such multitude
Descending, every light in heaven, methought,
Was shed thence.

H. F. Cary.

The "Hosanna" is again heard, and the symphony ends in soft harmonies (B major) with the first Magnificat theme.

***

Liszt wrote to Wagner, June 2, 1855: "Then you are reading Dante? He is excellent company for you. I, on my part, shall furnish a kind of commentary to his work. For a long time I had in my head a Dante symphony, and in the course of this year it is to be finished. There are to be three movements, 'Hell,' 'Purgatory,' and 'Paradise,' the two first purely instrumental, the last with chorus."

Wagner wrote in reply a long letter from London: "That 'Hell' and 'Purgatory' will succeed I do not call into question for a moment, but as to 'Paradise' I have some doubts, which you confirm by saying that your plan includes choruses. In the Ninth Symphony the last choral movement is decidedly the weakest part, although it is historically important, because it discloses to us in a very naïve manner the difficulties of a real musician who does not know how (after hell and purgatory) he is to describe paradise. About this paradise, dearest Franz, there is in reality a considerable difficulty, and he who confirms this opinion is, curiously enough, Dante himself, the singer of Paradise, which in his 'Divine Comedy' also is decidedly the weakest part." And then Wagner wrote at length concerning Dante, Christianity, Buddhism, and other matters. "But, perhaps, you will succeed better, and as you are going to paint a *tone* picture, I might almost predict your suc-

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cess, for music is essentially the artistic, original image of the world. For the initiated no error is here possible. Only about the 'Paradise,' and especially about the choruses, I feel some friendly anxiety."

***

Liszt wrote to "a Friend" ("Briefe an eine Freundin," Leipsic, 1894) from Dresden just before the first performance of the "Dante" Symphony: "The Bülows will come here for the concert of November 7, which now looks as though it would be successful, for the players are well disposed. It is also possible that criticism will be less hostile to me this time than it has been before. In any case I shall still go on my way, for all my reflections are made, and as I believe *well made* in regard to this. I'll speak to you about my 'Dante' when I shall have heard it. You know that I dedicate it to Wagner, and this shows you that I have not a bad opinion of the work."

The symphony did not meet with success at this first performance. Hans von Bülow, eight years afterward, frankly spoke of "a fiasco which may be likened to that of 'Tannhäuser' in Paris."

In a letter to Franz Brendel written from Rome in 1862, Liszt referred to the first performance at Dresden: "In spite of the unsatisfactory performance of the Dante Symphony in Dresden (partly, moreover, the fault of the bad, incorrectly written orchestral parts, and my careless conducting), and without regard to the *rapture* of the *spiritual* substance (a matter which the general public tolerates only when demanded by the higher authority of *tradition*, and then immediately gapes at it upside down!) in spite, therefore, of this grievous Dresden

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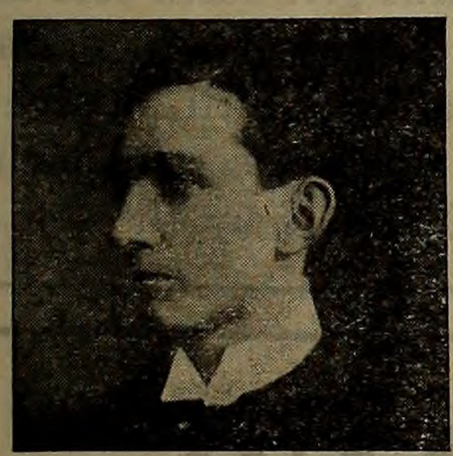
performance, which brought me only the one satisfaction of directly setting to work at some not unessential improvements, simplifications, and eliminations in the score—that had taken hold of me during the rehearsals and the performance, and which I felt at once, without troubling myself about the audience present. . . . Now, what was I about to say, after all these parentheses and digressions? Yes, I remember now: the Dante Symphony is a work that does not need to be ashamed of its title,—and what you tell me of the impression produced by the *Bergsymphonie* (in Sondershausen) strengthens me in my presumption."

***

On July 6, 1861, Liszt wrote to the Princess Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein that he had sent a copy of his "Dante" symphony to Rossini. "The copy which I ran over with him at Paris had been lent to me by Wagner. The '*Mélodiste italien pur sang,*' as Rossini signs his letter in reply, did not find himself in his natural element—reading my episode of Francesca da Rimini, which perhaps touches a more lofty region of the soul. However, I fancy that if he should hear this symphony, he would quickly grasp, with the marvellous intuition that is peculiar to his genius, that which I have wished to express. However this may be, his letter is charming and delicately flattering."

***

Richard Pohl wrote a preface to the symphony the night before the performance at Dresden. The Princess Wittgenstein was not wholly satisfied with the preface, and for the next performance in Prague



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(March 11, 1858) she persuaded him to rewrite it, or rather she finally did the work herself. This preface was printed in Prague in 1858. It differs greatly from a third version which, signed by Pohl, was published in the score.

* * *

The composer wished that the chorus with the accompanying harmonium should be unseen, or should be seated in a gallery over the orchestra. He also preferred a chorus of well-trained boys to a chorus of women's voices.

Concerto in B minor for Violin, No. 3, Op. 61.

Camille Saint-Saëns

(Born at Paris, October 9, 1835; still living there.)

This concerto was composed in 1880. It was played for the first time at a Châtelet concert in Paris, January 2, 1881, by Sarasate, to whom it is dedicated. It was played for the first time in Boston by Mr. Timothée Adamowski at a concert of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, January 4, 1890. It was played afterward at these concerts by Mr. Ysaye (December 1, 1894), Miss Mead (January 29, 1898), Mr. Adamowski (March 8, 1902), Mr. Sauret, April 9, 1904.

The concerto is in three movements. The first, Allegro non troppo, B minor, 2-2, opens with a pianissimo, tremolando B minor chord (strings and kettledrums). The solo violin enters almost immediately with the first theme, while wood-wind and horns give forth soft staccato chords. The violin exposes the theme, and then has passage-work accompanied by the orchestra. After a forte tutti passage on the first theme, there is a recitative for solo violin, a sort of prelude to the second theme, which is announced (E major) by the solo in-

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strument, and is developed a little against a simple accompaniment. Fragments of the first theme appear in the strings. There is a short free fantasia, in which the first theme is worked out,—for the most part by the orchestra against running passages in the violin,—and there is a return to the key of B minor. The solo violin then has the recitative passage that introduced the second theme, and proceeds to the second theme itself, which is now in B major. This theme is developed, and in the coda the first theme is developed in a new way.

The second movement, Andantino quasi allegretto, B-flat major, 6-8, opens with sustained harmony in strings and a chord or two in the wood-wind. A melody in Siciliano* rhythm is sung by the solo violin, and the closing figure of each phrase of the melody is echoed twice by other instruments, with a final flute arpeggio to each period. The melody is repeated by the oboe, and the solo violin takes part in the echo and the arpeggio. After episodic passages in the violin, the second theme, a more emotional melody, is given out by the solo instrument, forte, over a figure in strings and wind. There are subsidiary themes in the violin, and there is a return of the Siciliano melody in B-flat major as an orchestral tutti; the violins play the melody in octaves against repeated chords in the wood-wind and the horns. The solo violin sings the second phrase of the theme, and proceeds to the second theme. The movement closes with a short coda, with arpeggios in harmonics of the solo instrument and lower clarinet tones.

* The Siciliana, or Siciliano, is an idyllic dance of Sicily frequently performed at weddings. It has been described as follows: "The peasants dance to a flute, or a tambourine with bells: those who are above the peasants in the social scale have an orchestra of two or three violins. Sometimes the music is furnished by a bagpipe or guitar. The ball is opened by a man, who, taking his cap in hand, bows low to the woman; she then rises noisily and dances with all her might, the couple holding each other by means of a handkerchief. After a time the man makes another profound bow and sits down, while the woman continues pirouetting by herself; then she walks round the room and chooses a partner, and so it goes on, man and woman alternately dancing and choosing. The married couples dance by themselves, until toward the end of the evening, when they all dance together." It has also been described as a sort of passe-pied danced to a lively measure of 6-8. A dancing master, Gawlikoski, about 1850, in Paris, gave the name of this dance to a form of waltz, and the dance was in fashion for a year or two. Walther, in his "Music Lexicon" (Leipsic, 1732), classed the Siciliana as a Canzonetta: "The Sicilian Canzonetten are after the manner of a gigue, 12-8 or 6-8."

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The third movement opens with a short and slow introduction, Molto moderato e maestoso, in B minor, 4-4, a sort of recitative for the solo violin with orchestral accompaniment. The main body of the movement, Allegro non troppo, B minor, 2-2, begins with the first theme in the solo violin over an accompaniment of repeated chords in the bassoons and the horns. There are then sustained harmonies in oboes and clarinets with pizzicato arpeggios for the strings. This theme is followed immediately by a second, cantabile, also played and developed by the solo instrument. A third theme, in D major, is announced and developed by the violin. The first theme is worked out in a rather long orchestral tutti, and then a fourth theme appears, a quiet song in G major, given out pianissimo in harmony by muted violins and violas in four parts, and afterward sung by the solo violin against a flowing contrapuntal accompaniment in the wood-wind and first violins. Then the muted violins and violas proceed with the second verse of the theme in high harmonies. The solo instrument follows against like harmonies in the strings and soft arpeggios in the flute. The working-out is long and elaborate. The first theme returns in B minor, and the third part of the movement begins. The development is here somewhat shorter; the flute and oboe hint at the second theme; the third theme comes in for a moment in the solo violin, in C major, and the fourth theme fortissimo in the trumpets and trombones in four-part harmony against contrapuntal figures in the strings in octaves. The theme is now in B major, and the proclamation of it by the brass is followed by a development by the solo violin over tremulous harmonies in violins and violas (divided) and syncopated staccato notes in the wood-wind and in the 'cellos *pizz.* The coda, of a free nature, is based for the most part on the third theme.

Mr. Otto Neitzel, in his Life of Saint-Saëns (1899), describes the concerto as follows: "The first and the third movements are characterized by sombre determination, which in the Finale, introduced by an instrumental recitative, appears with intensified passion. The middle

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movement is in strong contrast, and over it the spring-sun smiles. There is toward the end a striking effect produced by lower clarinet tones and the solo violin with octave harmonics. A hymn serves as an appeasing episode in the stormy passion of the Finale; it reappears in the brass; warring strings try to drive it away; it is a thoughtfully conceived and individual passage both in rhythm and in timbre."

The concerto is scored for solo violin, two flutes (one of which is interchangeable with piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, three trombones, kettledrums, and strings.

ENTR'ACTE.

MUSICAL PATRIOTISM.

(From the London *Times*, May 20, 1911.)

The British race, as a whole, is no doubt at the present time of national festivity experiencing more or less the same emotions as in 1887, 1897, and 1902; but their musical expression is in many respects different. In 1887 musical patriotism hardly existed, and only very gradually has it become conscious of itself and of its aims. But now the Imperialist spirit has seized on the art: political ideals color much musical criticism, and there is growing up a demand that our musical youth shall be fed much more than hitherto on pure British-grown food. Wealthy music-lovers transport large bodies of singers many thousands of miles in order to bind the whole of the subjects of King George with artistic bands; and many concerts—notably the remarkable series to be given at the Crystal Palace—are definitely designed to foster the local pride of the various sections of the world under the British flag. The native composer is taking courage to hold his head

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higher and higher, and to speak with his enemies in the gate in a tone of manly, not to say defiant, self-confidence. We are welcoming an International Musical Congress to London and displaying to our distinguished foreign guests national glories of which their grandfathers were, through faults on both sides, almost entirely ignorant.

No doubt political movements during the past decade have helped all this on: whatever our views on economics, ideas have been in the air which, consciously or not, have certainly influenced art. And simultaneously, though naturally only within the limits of the United Kingdom, there has been the great advance of the folk-song and folk-dance crusade, which has steadily relied for its emotional driving force on the instinct of patriotism, local and national. Many of us may indeed have genially, not to say enthusiastically, allowed the expression of the pride in home and race to cover a multitude of sins; and at a time like the present a strange tangled growth of artistic weeds springs up only to wither in a few short weeks. But these are passing incidents: the main fact is that musical patriotism is now something that has to be reckoned with seriously,—far more seriously than ever in these islands before.

It is not, of course, in itself a new thing. In Elizabethan days great composers complained that native work was ousted by Italian. When Charles II. sent Pelham Humfrey to study Parisian ballets in order to learn how to write English anthems, the proceeding seemed, to not a few, very curious. "The Beggar's Opera" was a natural reaction against the artistic dominance of the aristocratic clique which had invited the Kapellmeister of a German Court to produce an apparently endless string of Italian operas in London; and this last "exotic and irrational entertainment," as Johnson called it, encountered plenty of patriotic opposition from a democratic minority down to its extinction (in its old inartistic shape) not so very many years ago. No doubt we have often been only too willing lightly to sell our national birthright: we have complacently submitted to crushing alien domination in theatre and concert-room alike. It is all to the good that we have now, beyond any possibility of recall, entered on the path of justice to ourselves and our musical achievements, past and present.

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We have far too long, as a nation, been content to hand music over to the foreigner as something good enough for him, but below our own dignity. Such an attitude, degrading both to England and to art, is now a thing of the past, and we may be duly grateful.

Nevertheless, an occasional pause for sober reflection is not amiss, especially at a time when the world of music, like any other, seems to be full of shouts and waving flags. Let us remember Johnson again: "Patriotism, Sir, is the last refuge of a scoundrel." No thinking man will deny that there is much more truth in this than the unimaginative Boswell seems to have seen; and the apparent paradox has its application in music no less than elsewhere. Out of our past sins against our own flesh and blood have come many great virtues. We have kept ourselves free from the curse of narrow jealousy, we have readily welcomed all that is good, both in men and in ideas, from abroad; we have been, as it were, a channel through which, without any conscious assistance from ourselves, has flowed almost everything great in European music, from the mediæval art of the Church of Rome down to the foreign masterpieces of to-day. Our musical annals show nothing like the Parisian début of "Tannhäuser"; the attempts, some time ago, to rouse patriotic prejudice against the ex-English Herr Eugen d'Albert expired of inanition. However mixed may have been our motives, however inadequate and unfair our actions, we have at any rate stood unflinchingly for the principle of the open door in art, the cosmopolitanism of the great spiritual things.

Are we to sacrifice this at the bidding of the musical imperialists of to-day? There are indeed not a few signs that the nationalist movement is going ahead quite fast enough: there almost seem dim visions of a future budget that will penalize the unpatriotic performer of Bach or Beethoven. British music—*qua* British, only very secondarily *qua* music—is insistently demanded; singers are told, in fairly plain terms, to leave Schubert and Brahms to Germans and to concern themselves rather with the works of Mr. X. and Mr. Z. or with native folk-music, good, bad, and indifferent (though, of course, the existence of the two latter classes is vehemently denied). Emerson said that the greatest genius was the most indebted man; but the mod-

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ern British composer is now rather enjoined to emulate Melchizedek, except in so far that he may commendably borrow, and pass off as his own, any tunes that he happens to hear in a country alehouse. Sir Edward Elgar learns, no doubt to his great surprise, that he might just as well, for all the difference it has made to his work, never have known of the existence of the art outside these islands; we shall soon be demanding that all the members of the London Symphony Orchestra, including its conductors, shall have been born and bred within the four-mile radius. Many among us seem, indeed, very rapidly to be arriving at a conception of music which is not merely narrowly national, but even parochial. Not, of course, that any one would for a moment deny that much music to which patriotic sentiments, local or more than local, do happen to attach is artistically excellent; but the conjunction is not essential, and it is for the musician, not the patriot, to discriminate. We owe ourselves fair play, nothing more. Unless we are content to abnegate any artistic standpoint worth the name, we must needs acknowledge that it does not matter so much as one grain of dust in the scales whether the music and the musicians we prefer are products of the British Empire or of anywhere else on the face of the globe. Art is not a department of geography, nor of politics.

And after all, even if we can see some moral if no other merit in the cry of British music (good or bad) for the British race, we have still to define our terms; many a composer who is purely British in the eyes of the law is vigorously blamed for not writing purely British music. It is all very well if he is content to do nothing but dress up folk-tunes in various shapes,—patriotism is an easy refuge for the composer who cannot compose,—but, generally, he ventures to think that he has some ideas of his own. How is he to know if these will pass the imperialist test? What is the common denominator of "Sumer is icumen in" and Tallis and Wilbye and Purcell and Bennett and Sullivan and Elgar? Of course, no one can shake himself free from his ancestry; the fact that English music is in general much closer to German than to Italian is no doubt largely due to nearer kinship of blood. But such things, vague and elusive anyhow, are surely altogether unconscious elements in any living art; no composer worth the name can become

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"national" by taking thought. His temperament may or may not lead him to keep within hailing distance of the norm of his race, as represented in the rough average of the folk-music; but how is that a matter for either praise or blame? True nationality is broad enough to include nearly all imaginable varieties. The only consideration is the value, in the general terms of all races, of his artistic output; all great art, folk-music as much as any other, speaks a world-language, not a dialect. Why, at the call of the patriot, should we wilfully narrow our artistic heritage and blunt the edge of our judgment, and not even then know at what we aim? We may acknowledge as much as we like that our music is the product of our own environment, our own civilization, our own intellectual life; but we cannot set up fixed barriers, and, even if we could, why should we?

But perhaps we are inclined to take all this midsummer madness too literally. Increased opportunities of advancement and all-around fair play for British composer and performer, increased knowledge and love of the fine folk-music,—these are the firm and invaluable results of the last twenty years. If, like petulant children, we clamor for favors that we have done nothing to earn, for a preferential treatment that will use art as a mere pawn in the game of international jealousy, then perhaps a little gentle ridicule will do us more good than any attempt at reasoning.

"ROMEO AND JULIET," OVERTURE-FANTASIA AFTER SHAKESPEARE.

PETER ILJITSCH TSCHAIKOWSKY

(Born at Votinsk, in the government of Viatka, Russia, May 7, 1840: died at St. Petersburg, November 6, 1893.)

The "Romeo and Juliet" overture-fantasia as played to-day is by no means the work as originally conceived and produced by the composer.

Kashkin told us a good many years ago about the origin of the overture, and how Tschaikowsky followed Mily Balakireff's suggestions:

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"This is always associated in my mind with the memory of a lovely day in May, with verdant forests and tall fir-trees, among which we three were taking a walk. Balakireff understood, to a great extent, the nature of Tschaikowsky's genius, and knew that it was adequate to the subject he suggested. Evidently he himself was taken with the subject, for he explained all the details as vividly as though the work had been already written. The plan, adapted to sonata form, was as follows: first, an introduction of a religious character, representative of Friar Laurence, followed by an Allegro in B minor (Balakireff suggested most of the tonalities), which was to depict the enmity between the Montagues and Capulets, the street brawl, etc. Then was to follow the love of Romeo and Juliet (second subject, in D-flat major), succeeded by the elaboration of both subjects. The so-called 'development'—that is to say, the putting together of the various themes in various forms—passes over to what is called, in technical language, the 'recapitulation,' in which the first theme, Allegro, appears in its original form, and the love theme (D-flat major) now appears in D major, the whole ending with the death of the lovers. Balakireff spoke with such conviction that he at once kindled the ardor of the young composer." (Englished by Mrs. Rosa Newmarch.)

After Kashkin's Reminiscences of Tschaikowsky appeared, Modest Tschaikowsky's Life of his illustrious brother was published. I quote in the course of this article from Paul Juon's translation into German. Let us see what Modest says about the origin and early years of this overture.

The first mention of "Romeo and Juliet" is in a digression concerning the influence of Henri Litolff, the composer of the "Robespierre" and "The Girondists" overtures, over Tschaikowsky; and, if we wonder at this, it is a good thing to remember that the flamboyant Litolff was

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once taken most seriously by Liszt and others who were not ready to accept the claims of every new-comer. But it is not necessary for us to examine now any questions of opinion concerning real or alleged influence.

It was during the winter of 1868–69 that Tschaikowsky fell madly in love with the opera singer Marguerite Joséphine Désirée Artôt. The story of this passion, of his eagerness to marry her, of her sudden choice of the baritone Padilla as a husband, has already been told in a Programme Book of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.* It is enough to say that in 1869 Tschaikowsky was still passionately fond of her, and it was not for some years that he could even speak her name without emotion.

In August, 1869, Tschaikowsky wrote to his brother Anatole that Mily Balakireff, the head of the neo-Russian band of composers (among whom were Rimsky-Korsakoff, Borodin, César Cui), was then living at Moscow. "I must confess that his presence makes me rather uncomfortable: he obliges me to be with him the whole day, and this is a

* Programme Book of January 31, 1903. Mme. Artôt died April 3, 1907.

great bore. It's true he is a very good man, and he is deeply interested in me: but—I don't know why—it is hard work for me to be intimate with him. The narrowness of his musical opinions and his brusque manner do not please me." He wrote a few days later: "Balakireff is still here. We meet often, and it is my firm belief that, in spite of all his virtues, his company would oppress me like a heavy stone, if we should live together in the same town. The narrowness of his views and the arrogance with which he holds them are especially disagreeable to me. Nevertheless, his presence has helped me in many ways." And he wrote August 30: "Balakireff went away to-day. If he was in my opinion irritating and a bore, justice compels me to say that I consider him to be an honorable and a good man, and an artist that stands immeasurably higher than the crowd. We parted with true emotion."

Tschaikowsky began work on "Romeo and Juliet" toward the end of September, 1869. Balakireff kept advising him, urging him on by letter. Thus he wrote in October: "It seems to me that your inactivity comes from the fact that you do not concentrate yourself, in spite of your 'friendly hovel' of a lodging." (Yet Tschaikowsky had been working furiously on twenty-five Russian songs arranged for pianoforte, four hands, "in the hope of receiving money from Jurgenson," the publisher.) Balakireff went on to tell him his own manner of composition, and illustrated it by his "King Lear" overture. "You should know," he added, "that in thus planning the overture I had not as yet any determined ideas. These came later, and began to adjust themselves to the traced outlines of the forms. I believe that all this would happen in your case, if you would only first be enthusiastic over the scheme. Then arm yourself with galoshes and a walking-stick, and walk along the boulevards. Begin with the Nikitsky, let yourself be thoroughly impregnated with the plan, and I am convinced that you will have found some theme or an episode by the time you reach the Sretensky Boulevard. At this moment, while I think of you and your overture, I myself am aroused involuntarily, and I picture to

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myself that the overture must begin with a raging 'Allegro with sword-cuts,' something like this" (Balakireff sketched five measures, to which Tschaikowsky evidently paid little heed); "I should begin something like this. If I were to compose the overture, I should thus grow enthusiastic over this egg, and should hatch it, or I should carry about the kernel in my brain until something living and possible in this fashion were developed from it. If letters just now would exert a favorable influence over you, I should be exceedingly happy. I have some right to lay claim to this, for your letters are always a help to me." In November he wrote again in words of lively interest; he asked Tschaikowsky to send him sketches, and promised that he would say nothing about them until the overture was finished.

Tschaikowsky sent him his chief themes, and, lo, Balakireff wrote a long critical review: "The first theme does not please me at all; perhaps it will come out all right in the development, but as it now is, in its naked form, it has neither strength nor beauty, and does not adequately characterize Friar Laurence. Here is the place for something after the manner of a choral by Liszt ('Der nächtliche Zug,' 'Hunnenschlacht,' and 'Die heilige Elisabeth') in old Catholic style; but your theme is of a wholly different character, in the style of a quartet by Haydn, bourgeois music which awakens a strong thirst for beer. Your theme has nothing antique, nothing Catholic about it; it is much nearer the type of Gogol's 'Comrade Kunz,' who wished to cut off his nose so that he should not be obliged to pay out money for snuff. It is possible your theme will be very different in the development—and then I'll take all this back. As for the theme in B minor, it would serve as a very beautiful introduction for a theme. After the running about in C major must come something very energetic, powerful. I take it that this is really so, and that you were too lazy to write out the

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continuation. The first theme in D-flat major is exceedingly beautiful, only a little languishing; the second in D-flat is simply wonderful. I often play it, and I could kiss you heartily for it. There is love's ardor, sensuousness, longing, in a word, much that would be exactly to the taste of the immoral German Albrecht. I have only one criticism to make about this theme: there is too little inner, psychical love, but rather fantastical, passionate fervor, with only slight Italian tinting. Romeo and Juliet were no Persian lovers: they were Europeans. I don't know whether you understand what I wish to say—I always find a great difficulty in expression; I launch into a musical treatise, and I must take refuge in illustrative examples: the theme in A-flat major in Schumann's 'Braut von Messina' overture is a good example of a motive in which there is expression of inner love. This theme, I admit, has its weaknesses; it is morbid and too sentimental toward the end, but the ground-mood is exceedingly well caught. I await impatiently the whole score for a just view of your overture, which is full of talent. It is your best work, and your dedication of it to me pleases me mightily. This is the first piece by you which fascinates by the mass of its beauties, and in such a way that one without deliberation can call it good. It is not to be likened to the old drunken Melchisedek, who breaks into a horrible trepak * in the Arbatsky Place, from sheer misfortune. Send me the score as soon as possible. I pant to know it."

Tschaikowsky made some changes; and still Balakireff was not satisfied. He wrote February 3, 1871: "I am much pleased with the introduction, but I do not at all like the close. It is impossible for me to write explicitly about it. It would be better for you to come here, where we could talk it over. You have made something new and good in the middle section, the alternating chords on the organ-point above, a little '*à la Ruslan.*' † There is much routine in the close; the whole part after the end of the second theme (D major) is, as it were, pulled violently out of the head. The very end itself is not bad, but why these blows in the last measures? They contradict the contents

*A Russian national dance.

† After the manner of Glinka in his opera, "Ruslan und Ludmilla" (St. Petersburg, 1842).

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of the drama, and it is coarse. Nadeshda Nikolajewna * has stricken out these chords with her pretty little hand, and would fain close her pianoforte arrangements with a pianissimo."

Nor was Balakireff content with these criticisms. He wrote: "It's a pity that you, or, rather, N. Rubinstein, was in such a hurry about the publication of the overture. Although the new introduction is far more beautiful, I had the irresistible wish to change certain passages in the overture, and not to dismiss it so quickly, in the hope of your future works. I hope that Jurgenson will not refuse to give the score of the newly revised and finally improved overture to the engraver a second time."

Tschaikowsky wrote, October 19, 1869, that the overture was completed. It was begun October 7, 1869; the sketch was finished October 19; by November 27, 1869, it was scored. In the course of the summer of 1870 it was wholly rewritten: there was a new introduction, the dead march toward the close was omitted, and the orchestration was changed in many passages.

"Balakireff and Rimsky-Korsakoff were here yesterday," Tschaikowsky wrote on January 25, 1870; "Balakireff begins to honor me more and more.† . . . My overture pleased them very much, and it also pleases me."

A day or so before the performance Tschaikowsky wrote his brother Modest: "There has already been one rehearsal. The piece does not seem to be ugly. As for the rest—that is known only to the dear Lord!"

The first performance of the overture was on March 16, 1870, at a concert of the Musical Society, Moscow. The work was not successful. Nicolas Rubinstein, who conducted, had just been sentenced to a fine of twenty-five roubles on account of some act of executive severity in the Conservatory. A newspaper on the day of the concert suggested that the admirers of Rubinstein should take up a collection at the

* The wife of Rimsky-Korsakoff. In his final version Tschaikowsky himself struck out the chords.

† Tschaikowsky some years afterward wrote letters in which he defined clearly his position toward the "Cabinet" of the neo-Russian school, and also put forth his views on "national music." In a letter written to Mrs. von Meck (January 5, 1878) he described Balakireff as "the most important individuality of the circle; but he has grown mute and has done little. He has an extraordinary talent, which has been choked by various fatal circumstances. After he had made a parade of his infidelity, he suddenly turned devote. Now he is always in church, fasts, prays to all sorts of relics—and does nothing else. In spite of his extraordinary gifts, he has stirred up much mischief. It was he that ruined the early years of Rimsky-Korsakoff by persuading him that he had nothing to learn. He is the true inventor of the doctrines of this remarkable circle, in which so much undeveloped or falsely developed strength, or strength that prematurely went to waste, is found." Balakireff, born in 1836, was not idle of late years. He wrote two symphonies, a piano concerto, as well as ingenious pianoforte pieces. Among his earlier orchestral works are symphonic poems ("Tamara" and "King Lear") and overtures with Russian, Czech, and Spanish themes. His oriental fantasia, "Islamei," for pianoforte, is well known in this country, and his "Tamara" was first played by the Chicago Orchestra in 1896. His symphony in C major was played in Boston at a concert of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, March 14, 1908. His symphonic poem "In Bohemia" was played in Boston at a concert of the Boston Orchestral Club, January 21, 1908; his Overture on Three Russian Themes at a concert of the Boston Orchestral Club, April 19, 1910; his Overture on a Theme of a Spanish March, November 25, 1911, at a concert of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Balakireff died June 24, 1910.

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concert, so that he should not be obliged to serve out the fine in jail. This excited such indignation that, when Rubinstein appeared on the stage, he was greeted with great enthusiasm, and no one thought of overture or concert. Tschaikowsky wrote to Klimenko: "My overture had no success at all here, and was wholly ignored. . . . After the concert a crowd of us supped at Gurin's restaurant. During the whole evening no one spoke to me a word about the overture. And yet I longed so for sympathy and recognition."

During a sojourn in Switzerland that summer Tschaikowsky made radical changes in "Romeo and Juliet." Through the assistance of N. Rubinstein and Karl Klindworth, the overture, dedicated to Mily Alexejewtisch Balakireff, was published by Bote and Bock, of Berlin, in 1871. It was soon played in German cities.

But Tschaikowsky was not satisfied with his work. He made still other changes, and, it is said, shortened the overture. The second edition, published in 1881, contains these alterations.

The first performance of "Romeo and Juliet" in America was by the Philharmonic Society of New York, Carl Bergmann conductor, April 22, 1876. The first performance in Boston was by the Symphony Orchestra, February 8, 1890.

The work is scored for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, English horn, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, bass tuba, a set of three kettledrums, bass drum, cymbals, harp, strings.

* * *

The overture begins Andante non tanto, quasi moderato, F-sharp minor, 4-4. Clarinets and bassoons sound the solemn harmonies which, according to Kashkin, characterize Friar Laurence; and yet Hermann Teibler finds this introduction symbolical of "the burden of fate." *

A short theme creeps among the strings. There is an organ-point on D-flat, with modulation to F minor (flutes, horns, harp, lower strings). The Friar Laurence theme is repeated (flutes, oboes, clarinets, English horn), with pizzicato bass. The ascending cry of the flutes is heard in E minor instead of F minor as before.

* "I do not think that Romeo is designed merely as an exhibition of a man unfortunate in love. I consider him to be meant as the character of an *unlucky* man,—a man who, with the best views and fairest intentions, is perpetually so unfortunate as to fail in every aspiration, and, while exerting himself to the utmost in their behalf, to involve all whom he holds dearest in misery and ruin." This is the view of Dr. William Maginn, who contrasted Romeo, the unlucky, with Bottom, the lucky man.

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Allegro giusto, B minor, 4-4. The two households "from ancient grudge break to new mutiny." Wood-wind, horns, and strings picture the hatred and fury that find vent in street broils. There is a brilliant passage for strings, which is followed by a repetition of the strife music. Then comes the first love theme, in D-flat major (muted violas and English horn, horns in syncopated accompaniment, with strings *pizz.*). This motive is not unlike in mood, and at times in melodic structure, Tschaikowsky's famous melody, "Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt" (Op. 6, No. 6), which was composed in December, 1869. In the "Duo from 'Romeo and Juliet,'" found among Tschaikowsky's sketches and orchestrated by S. Tanéïeff, this theme is the climax, the melodic phrase which Romeo sings to "O nuit d'extase, arrête toi, O nuit d'amour, étends ton voile noir sur nous!" ("Oh, tarry, night of ecstasy, O night of love, stretch thy dark veil over us!") Divided and muted violins, with violas *pizz.*, play most delicate and mysterious chords (D-flat major), which, in the duet above mentioned, serve as accompaniment to the amorous dialogue of Romeo and Juliet in the chamber scene. Flutes and oboes take up the first love theme.

There is a return to tumult and strife. The theme of dissension is developed at length, and the horns intone the Friar Laurence motive. The strife theme at last dominates in fortissimo until there is a return to the mysterious music of the chamber scene (oboes and clarinets, with murmurings of violins, and horns). The song grows more and more passionate until Romeo's love theme breaks out, this time in D major, and is combined with the strife theme and the motive of Friar Laurence in development. A tremendous burst of orchestral fury, and there is a descent to the depths, until 'cellos, basses, bassoons, alone are heard; they die on low F-sharp with roll of kettledrums. Then silence.

Moderato assai, B minor, 4-4. Drum-beats, double-basses, *pizz.*, and Romeo's song arises in lamentation. Soft chords (wood-wind and horns) bring the end.

***

The overture-fantasia, "Romeo and Juliet," has been performed in Boston at concerts of the Boston Symphony Orchestra February 8, 1890, February 21, 1891, April 1, 1893, April 4, 1896, January 28, 1899, March 14, 1903, April 28, 1906, April 13, 1907, March 11, 1911. It was played by the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, Mr. Listemann conductor, November 16, 1890.

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